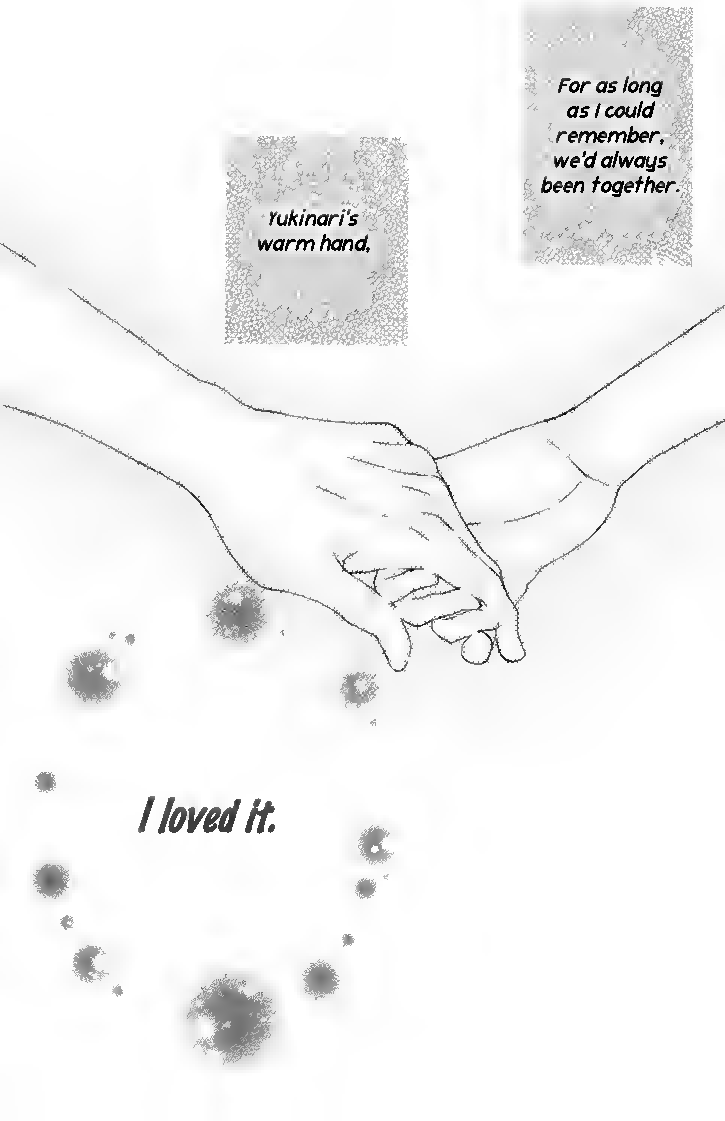
The Carrot and The Stick


For as long as I could remember, we'd always been together.
Yukinari's warm hand.
I loved it.

Nice and warm~
RATTLE
HOTARU -CHAN~
screech
JUST LEAVE THE TOWEL THERE
...
MAMA?

...
Smile
Smile
MIND IF I JOIN YA IN THE BATH?
...GY-

The Carrot and The Stick
LITTLE KID!?
THIS.. *180CM YUKINARI IS A LITTLE KID!?
YOU SHOULDN'T BE MEAN TO A LITTLE KID, RIGHT?
OH GOOD-NESS. HOTARU YOU
GYA AAA AAA
SPLASH

*TL note: that's about 5'10"

This all started...
...1 year ago.
BECAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT TO YUKINARI-KUN'S HEAD,
I'm so hungry
ah
GROWL~
HIS MIND HAS BECOME THAT OF A 5 YEAR OLD CHILD...
Grilled Pudding
Caramel Flavor
...HOTARU-SAN,
WHAT IS... THIS?

THE MORNING HOROSCOPE ON TV SAID THAT THIS IS THE TAURUS' LUCKY ITEM TODAY
YUKINARI! YOU'RE A TAURUS, RIGHT?
It's all in fortune.
I'm giving it to you
...
Yukinari (Before the Accident)
YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT I DON'T LIKE SWEETS
AND BECAUSE WE STOPPED BY THE CONVENIENCE STORE, WE WERE ALMOST LATE!
SO GIVING ME IT AT THIS POINT IN TIME IS UNLUCKY!
THE TAURUS WAS RANKED LAST ON TODAY'S LIST, SO

SORRY, YUKINARI!
WHERE'S THE "I'M SORRY"?
FINE! I FORGIVE YOU
HOTARU-SAN, YOU EAT THE PUDDING FOR LUNCH PLEASE
SURE
I loved Yukinari like that.
OKAY SO, LET'S RUN!
Yukinari was strict,
but he was just as kind

Yukinari has been afraid of dogs since he was bitten when he was little.

CUTE!
That's right!
HEY YUKI-NARI,
WANNA HOLD HANDS AND WALK LIKE WE USED TO?
I want to...
...comfort Yukinari
CHILDHOOD
THANK YOU.
...CU-

Sn ack!
...Please don't touch me in such a friendly manner.
...So-
Sorry.

HE'S PROBABLY GETTING CONFESSED TO RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
THAT YUKINARI GUY... SOME GIRL TOOK HIM UP TO THE ROOF
And... I failed again.
We're not kids anymore. I have to be more careful with what I do...
SURE
CONFESSION?
...RE YOU WALKING HOME WITH YUKINARI AGAIN TODAY?
YOU TWO ARE CLOSE, HUH?
I've wanted to tell him how I've felt so many times,
but I could never do it.
I'm afraid of destroying the relationship we have now.

I'm such an idiot...
I have no guarantee that Yukinari isn't going to be taken by someone else...
HOTARU-SAN
HUH? WHERE'S THE GIRL?
WHY ARE YOU SITTING? ARE YOU OKAY?
NOT FEELING WELL?
NO...
I GUESS I'M LACKING SLEEP
LET ME SLEEP FOR JUST 5 MINUTES
Yuki-nari...
Whenever he felt overwhelmed, he would fall asleep...

I wonder... if he would reject my confession?
I wonder... what he would say?
If I said I liked him,
A
Since a while ago,
I've also liked you, Hotaru-san.
B
I'm not sure how I can face you now. Let's go to school separately tomorrow.
Hotaru-san, I don't think of you in that way.
... Sorry

I love this troubled sleeping face of his too.
Ahh...
No no no! A is impossible. It's going to be 100%
Ahh!
That was crazy... the old me.
And we used to take baths together often too.
Because I always make Yukinari angry.
"I love..."
"I love you."
"I like you."

I LOVE YOU.

...
...HUH?
SURPRISE...
...Oh no!
Did I... say that out
...HOTARU -SAN,

ARE YOU SAYING YOU LIKE ME?
BA DU MP..
"Please don't touch me in such a friendly way."
What should I do, he's going to reject me...
I won't be able to be by his side anymore.
...H.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME THERE'S NO WAY...
NO! THAT'S NOT IT! I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT YOU!
PLEASE DON'T MIND ME!
THERE'S NO WAY THAT I'D LIKE YOU...
!!

HOTARU
-SAN...!!

And his mind turned into that of a 5 year old.
Because Yukinari covered me when I fell down the stairs,
he hit his head really hard,
I wanna go home
HE ONLY HAS MEMORIES UP UNTIL THE AGE OF 5
I CAN'T GUARANTEE WHEN HE'LL GET HIS MEMORIES BACK
ALSO, PLEASE HAVE HIM TAKE A TEMPORARY LEAVE FROM SCHOOL
...It's all my fault.
What should I do...
I've completely ruined Yukinari's life.

As I tried to get used to the fact that Yukinari had turned into a 5 year old,
we took him into our house
WHEN YOU'RE DISCHARGED FROM THE HOSPITAL WE'LL HAVE GRANDMA LOOK AFTER YOU
I'M SORRY MAMA HAS TO RETURN TO LOS ANGELES BECAUSE OF WORK
AND DAD IS GOING TO BE IN PARIS FOR A WHILE
I'LL BE WAITING FOR MAMA'S RETURN AS USUAL!!
...
I WANNA BE WITH O. I. G. HOTARU -CHAN.
BACK TO THE PRESENT.
YOU HAVEN'T WASHED YOUR HAIR YET
SO I'LL HELP YOU DRY SHAMPOO IT, OKAY?
OKAY

gasp
THIS IS A BIT RASH OF ME, HUH?
but...
It almost seems like we're close friends again
cu-
WA!
Cutie!!
I was a bit happy.
GROPE
Squish
Squish

GASP
...N-
NOOOO!!
OOF
AND HE'S THIS PERVERTED AND SUCH A CRYBABY ISN'T HE GOING TO TURN OUT SPOILED?
ONLY 5 YEARS OLD
UWAAAAAAAN!
GOODNESS HOTARU,
YOU MADE YUKINARI-KUN CRY AGAIN!!

MAYBE FROM THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF ENVIRONMENT
I GUESS HE'S PRETTY INSECURE
BREASTS, HUH?
To children, breasts have the power to give relief
They may touch it if they feel insecure
CLICK

...The 16 year old Yukinari held in there so well.
He must have been lonely, huh..
YOUR NANNY WILL BE HERE AT 6 O CLOCK
WELL NOW, MAMA'S GOING BACK TO WORK. BE A GOOD BOY OKAY!
HAVE A SAFE TRIP MOM!
GR
AB
KYAA..

Yukinari ...?
Yu-
Yu-
Ehhhh!?
Yukinari is barely even 16...
3 more years
HOTARU -CHAN,
WILL YOU MARRY ME?

the Yukinari whose memories are gone,

put his life on the line protecting me,

...The "grown up" Yukinari who,

—

HOTARU-CHAN?

because I had no confidence in myself,

I ended up hurting Yukinori

I wonder if he hates me now.

"PLEASE LET ME HURRY AND 'GROW UP,'"
"SO I CAN MARRY HOTARU -CHAN."
EVERY NIGHT I PRAYED,
I WAS ABLE TO "GROW UP..."
AND IT REALLY CAME TRUE...
I FEEL LIKE I CAN DO ANY-THING.
WHEN I'M WITH YOU, HOTARU-CHAN,
After all this time, there's no way I would like you...

Ruffle
IS THE B_I_G HOTARU-CHAN A CRYBABY_?
THE SMALL HOTARU-CHAN WOULDN'T HAVE CRIED EVEN IF SHE FELL_.
YOU'RE LIKE A BABY.
SO CUTE
BADUMP
it's the first time I've been called that
"Cute" is such a sweet word
Yukinari's big hands feel so nice_
AH.
OH YEAH!

LET'S "MAKE A BABY!"
NOW THAT WE'RE FINALLY BOTH ADULTS,
...What?
...
...MOTO-KUUUN!!
MOTO-KUN FROM THE KIRIN-CLASS...
...TOLD ME THAT IF WE MAKE A BABY, WE HAVE TO GET MARRIED.
YEP!
MA MAKE A BABY?
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?

... I'LL BE GENTLE,
SO JUST DO AS I SAY.
DO YOU WANT TOP? BOTTOM?
you're only 5 years old but,
your voice, body, and strength is all of the 16 year old Yukinari's.
you're too strong...
...I can't get up.
YUKINARI!

WHAT'S GOING ON?
CRACK
WRESTLING!
IF "GROWN UPS" WRESTLE IN BED AT NIGHT, THEY CAN MAKE A BABY!
MOTO-KUN HAS SCARY DREAMS AT NIGHT.
HE WENT IN HIS MOM AND DAD'S ROOM WHEN THEY WERE DOING "IT."
HUUUH UH...
Ah... that's right. At that age, children actually believe...
...that kind of false information.

zzzzz
DING DONG
Doki
DING DONG
He's been asleep like that since yesterday
Yeees
Ow my back hurts
Speaking of that...

DING DONG
He's sleeping normally,
just like the 16 year old Yukinari...
I WONDER IF MAMA WENT TO TENNIS
IT'S SO EARLY ON A SUNDAY MORNING. WHO IN THE WORLD
Who is it...
AH
HI THERE!!
WE CAME WITH SOME GET-WELL-GIFTS FOR YUKINARI!
SORRY FOR COMING SO SUDDENLY IN THE MORNING, HOTARU-SAN
MOTOHITO KEPT SAYING THAT HE WANTED TO SO NO MATTER WHAT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME

WOW, TASTY~
COMING.
COME IN, COME IN.
MOTOHITO-KUN AND NATSUMI-CHAN, THANK YOU.
Motohito-kun and Natsumi-chan often hung out...
...with Yukinari when they were classmates.

ONIICHAN, ONEECHAN,
THANKS FOR THE FOOD!
IT'S REALLY TRUE, HE'S JUST LIKE A 5 YEAR OLD...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN SUCH AN INNOCENT SMILE ON YUKINARI-KUN.
I thought you didn't like sweets.
So cute

puzzled
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
ARE YOU AN IDIOT? SHE SAID HE DOESN'T REMEMBER ANY OF HIS FRIENDS FROM HIGH SCHOOL.
YOU'RE THE IDIOT!
I'VE KNOWN HIM SINCE KINDER-GARTEN.
I TRANSFERED SCHOOLS PRETTY EARLY, BUT MET HIM AGAIN IN HIGH SCHOOL.
MOTO-KUN FROM KIRIN-CLASS!
I WAS A MR KNOW-IT-ALL. I TAUGHT YUKINARI A LOT OF THINGS
GRAB

KYAA
!!!
EEH... SO I'M THE ONLY ONE HE DOESN'T REMEMBER?
YOUR BREASTS ARE BIGGER THAN HOTARU-CHAN'S!

Does she...
..like Yukinari?
...stupid Yukinari.
What's with this...
The 16 year old Yukinari would never have done something like that.
It feels so gloomy.

...Let me be the only one you touch.
It hurts so much, I can't take it.
I'm... so pathetic.
I'm the one who couldn't confess to him.

Natsumi-chan...
...is a great girl.
...I'LL HELP OUT TOO.
THANKS
UM HOTARU-SAN
I'M SORRY FOR HAVING BIGGER BOOBS.
They're my only weapons
SLAAAAP
boo

BUT EVEN THIS TROUBLE SOME WEAPON,
WON'T HELP ME GET THE PERSON I LOVE
THE PERSON YOU LOVE?
I CAME HERE TODAY TO
KEEP AN EYE ON MOTOHITO
SO THAT YOU AND MOTOHITO DON'T GET TOO CLOSE

I WOULDN'T GET CLOSE TO HIM!
OH REALLY?
I WON'T FORGIVE YOU IF YOU'RE LYING.
CLO-
THE LONGER YOU'RE WITH SOMEONE, THE HARDER IT IS AND LONGER IT TAKES FOR YOU TO CONFESS. HUH
I KNOW THAT HE DOESN'T THINK OF ME THAT WAY...
AND I DON'T WANT TO DESTROY OUR CURRENT RELATION-SHIP
Ah...
I DON'T WANT TO REGRET IT SOME DAY,
SO I'M GOING TO DO MY BEST WHILE HE S STILL CLOSE TO ME!

HE'S JUST A FRIEND I'VE KNOWN SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL
She said it flat-out
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING OUT WITH MOTOHITO-KUN
So Natsumi-chan was this kind of person...

I truly understand your feelings...

My heart is always saying "I love him."

but to say it with words, one must have complete courage...

I LOVE YOU!!
Children are amazing.
Squeeze
They can speak the feelings from their hearts so easily.
Your hair is so soft.

...I LOVE YOU TOO.
I WANT TO BE TOGETHER FOREVER.
...true feelings.
These are my...
MY HEART IS A LITTLE MORE GROWN UP THAN YOURS BUT,
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.

I'll be waiting for the day...
...that I can meet the 16 year old Yukinari again.
YUKI-NARI,
ARE YOU OKAY ..!?
HOTARU... CHAN...
SHARP PAIN
AH...

WAIT RIGHT THERE!
I'LL CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!
HOTARU-CHAN
STAY BY MY SIDE.
IT'S NOT...
...HURTING THAT SADLY...

YUKINARI!
BEE PO
BEE PO

...it's been 3 months since he's been hospitilized.
Yukinari still hasn't regained consciousness..
KNOCK
KNOCK
I'M COMING IN

Slips off
On my way home from school everyday,
I come to see Yukinari.
OUTSIDE IS COMPLETELY COVERED IN SNOW
I wonder Right now,
what is Yukinari dreaming about?
THE IV LOOKS PAINFUL
...
"To children, the breasts have the power to give relief..."

...
DOKI
DOKI
Eek
PUFF
...YUKINARI, YOU LIKED TOUCHING MY BREASTS, RIGHT...?
...HOW IS IT? DO YOU FEEL BETTER?

CLICK
JUST KIDDING... I GUESS...
TWITCH

gasp
gasp
YOU
I'M
NOT
I'M..
...REALLY
NOT...
THAT..
PERVER
TOO....

TAKE IT...
-BACK

Yukinari's awakened.
You were perturbed.
He doesn't remember a thing...
...about turning into a 5 year old.
We were...
...the same as ever.

Twitch
...
...
Squeeze
Ehehe
I ACTUALLY... WAS NEVER AFRAID OF DOGS.
HOTARU -SAN,

...
I'M SORRY FOR EVERY-THING UNTIL NOW.
EH?
HUH?!
...
WHY ARE YOU LYING?
SINCE WHEN WERE YOU FINE WITH DOGS?
EH?

I ALSO,
LOVE HOTARU-SAN.

...YU-
YUKINARI...?
Ahah
Ahah!
THAT DAY,
WHEN YOU SAID "I LOVE YOU" AND THEN DENIED IT, I WAS SHOCKED.
DAY AFTER DAY, I WANTED TO BE WITH YOU, I WANTED TO TOUCH YOU IT WAS UNBEARABLE
AND WHEN YOU DIDN'T NOTICE IT, I FELT LIKE I WAS GOING TO DIE
"No, that's not it! I wasn't talking about you!"
Yukinari...
BLUSH
...you really thought of me that way?
ALSO?
GULP

...I DON'T REMEMBER SUCH A THING
I JUST REMEMBER YOUR CONFESSION... AND SEEING YOU IN THE BATH
...!!
...COULD IT BE,
THAT YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU TURNED INTO A 5 YEAR OLD?

"I love you too."

"I want to be together forever."

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August 23rd: a day to remember...